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ABSTRACT

In 1993 the subject Care was introduced as a compulsory subject in Dutch secondary schools. This paper analyzes the heated discussion preceding the decision. The introduction of the subject Care is regarded as a case study that illustrates the problems linked with feminist curriculum politics. The paper argues that the discussion referred to fundamental issues concerning "citizenship" and the objectives of education. Although feminists were successful in their lobby to have Care included in the common curriculum, they have remained within the dichotomous confines of the debate as framed by the subjects' opponents: the oppositions of private versus public sphere, and cognitive versus practical and moral education. It is argued that feminist curriculum politics should try to avoid these oppositions in order to realize a broad, educational model and a broad definition of citizenship. (Contains 20 references.) (LMI)

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'Care' for feminist citizenship

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Summary

In 1993 the subject Care was introduced as a compulsory subject in Dutch secondary schools. This paper analyzes the heated discussion preceding this decision. We consider the introduction of the subject Care as a case-study of the problems linked with feminist curriculum politics and argue that this discussion referred to fundamental issues concerning 'citizenship' and the objectives of education. Although feminists were successful in their lobby to have Care included in the common curriculum, they have remained within the dichotomous confines of the debate as framed by the subject's opponents: the oppositions private vs. public sphere, and cognitive vs. practical and moral education. We argue that feminist curriculum politics should try to avoid these oppositions in order to realize a broad, educational model and a broad definition of citizenship.

Introduction

> 'Everybody should have an educational qualification that enables him or her, regardless of the composition of the family unit, to be able to support his or herself on the one hand and *to be able to take on domestic and caring tasks independently*' on the other. (Dutch Equal Opportunities Policy Plan 1985)

The concept of citizenship has been criticized over the last fifteen years from a feminist perspective (Pateman 1989). The criticism focuses in particular on the assumed gender-neutral definition of citizenship. In classical liberal and democratic theory, the ideal, typical citizen is in fact the independent, male householder; employment is the key to citizenship (Pateman 1988, p. 238-239). In such a definition women can only be seen as lacking the characteristics, qualities, attributes, and identity that full members of the political community are supposed to have. At the same time, domains and values traditionally ascribed to women are not considered to be an area of political relevance (see Jones 1990). A plea is made by feminists for a more diversified and pluralistic model of citizenship in which these 'feminine' domains and values can be included. Besides arguing for a broad definition of citizenship, feminists have criticized the separation in modern society of private and public life. In liberal theory, the public sphere is defined as the sphere of politics while the private sphere, which is the sphere of the family, is assumed to be free from political interference. 'Citizenship' is seen as being exclusively related to the public sphere. Feminists have tried to undermine the oppositions private/personal and public/political by pointing out the political determination of private life, and by emphasizing that women's activities in the private sphere are politically relevant.

Education and citizenship are linked. One of the functions of education is to prepare young people for future citizenship. Equal opportunities policies in education in Western countries are often aimed at stimulating girls to participate in all sectors of society to the same extent as boys. On reflection, it is clear that 'all sectors of society' actually mean the labor market and other activities in the 'public' sphere. From the feminist perspective outlined above, the approach to encouraging girls to participate on the labour market can be called into question as being only a partial emancipation strategy. It reflects the concept of citizenship that favours the values, experiences and practices associated with

men and masculinity.

Firstly, the emphasis on participation on the labour market marginalizes care activities. These activities are traditionally associated with women's work and are valued accordingly. Secondly, the limitations of the equal educational opportunities policies place girls in a double bind. Girls are asked to conform to a kind of citizenship which values the masculine more highly and, in order to do this, constructs itself in opposition to the feminine (Foster 1992). Not only does this leave the concept of citizenship and the way education is structured accordingly undiscussed, it also results in the idea that there is something wrong with girls and women; they are lacking the attributes, values and motivations that real citizens ought to possess (Volman, ten Dam & van Eck 1993; Walker-dine 1989).

A feminist educational strategy, focusing on education instead of girls, requires the development and implementation of a gender-balanced curriculum. Feminist curriculum politics in the Netherlands have resulted in two formal changes in education that can be claimed as successes. Both changes are linked with the discussion on citizenship. In 1990 and 1991, women's history was a compulsory examination subject in all Dutch secondary schools. One of the arguments supporting the introduction of women's history in secondary education was that it would contribute to a better understanding by girls of present-day Western society, a society based on gender-inequality, and their own position in that society as women. To achieve this goal, women's history firstly paid explicit attention to women in 'masculine' fields. The subject focuses on women who have played an important role in politics, the arts and intellectual life (e.g. suffragettes, female writers). Secondly, women's history attempted to reappraise domains traditionally ascribed to women; these are relevant to society and are worth studying (e.g. the family, birth-control). To a lesser extent, women's history endeavoured to make pupils sensitive to the way in which meaning is given to femininity and masculinity and how this meaning has changed. Summarizing, girls and boys were encouraged to look at women's work, their political participation, experiences, attitudes, norms etc. as constitutive elements of society and they were invited to discuss 'gender as a social construction' (see ten Dam & Rijkschroeff *forthcoming*). The second objective in particular concerned a broad definition of citizenship.

The introduction of women's history in secondary education was not the only achievement of feminists involved in curriculum politics. In 1993 the subject Care was introduced in the Dutch common curriculum. This second success is central to this paper. The inclusion of Care as one of the fifteen subjects in the common curriculum did not occur as a matter of course. A vehement lobby of feminists, teachers and organizations in the field of health and care was necessary. Heated discussions raged for several years between the supporters and opponents of the inclusion of Care in the curriculum. Underlying these debates was a conflict about the meaning of 'citizenship'. In this paper, we interpret the heated discussion instigated by the proposal to make Care a compulsory subject in Dutch secondary schools as a struggle about the meaning of 'citizenship' and the function of education in relation to different elements of citizenship.

We will first give a brief outline of the context in which the changes in the feminist curriculum took place, namely the Dutch educational system and the equal opportunities policies. Secondly, we will describe the subject Care and its history, followed by an analysis of the Care debate. Then we will discuss the strategies used by the subject's proponents, arguing that their reasons for including Care in the common curriculum are not consistently based on a broad educational model founded on a broad concept of citizenship. They have, therefore, remained within the dichotomous confines of the debate as framed by the subject's opponents: the oppositions private vs. public sphere and cognitive vs. practical and moral education.

The context: gender and Dutch secondary education

In the Netherlands full-time education is compulsory from the age of 5 until the age of 16.

A common curriculum, however, was only introduced in the first stage of secondary education in 1993. Until then, after primary education, pupils were directed at the age of twelve either into general secondary education or into vocational education. Within the latter, a choice had to be made immediately between several courses of study, e.g. technical, domestic and administrative, which were often offered in separate schools. It is not surprising that gender differences became apparent at this point. Boys were overrepresented in technical courses (and schools) and far more girls than boys opted for home economics. Since the introduction of a common curriculum in the first stage of secondary education, these choices are now postponed until the age of about 15. In the same period, many educational institutions were amalgamated and most schools teaching domestic, administrative and technical courses were merged into larger colleges, and sometimes were combined with schools for general secondary education. The common curriculum is offered at two levels. Schools for preparatory vocational education, as they are now called, usually offer the common curriculum at the lower level only, schools for general secondary education at the higher level only.

A central policy on equal opportunities in education has existed in the Netherlands since 1979, when the first policy document on this issue was published (Department of Education and Science 1979). The government, concerned about the conspicuously low level of participation of Dutch women on the labor market, formulated three policy objectives on gender equality: 1. reduction of factors that hamper freedom of choice, including breaking with traditional sex-stereotyped roles (roldoorbreking); 2. revaluation of feminine qualities (herwaardering); and 3. improved educational opportunities for women to enable them to 'catch up' (achterstanden inhalen).

In spite of the diversity of policy objectives, Dutch feminists have always felt that the emphasis was placed primarily on the aim of 'catching up with boys'. The criticism was made that girls were expected to become more like boys in their achievements, choice of subjects and future expectations. In policy documents, girls emerged primarily as a group that was lagging behind. Policy paid relatively little attention to the conditions which would make it attractive for them to change and to the question whether this was desirable. The government was concentrating too much on 'equality' under the conditions of a 'masculine' norm. The objective of 'revaluating feminine values' has proved to be far more difficult to incorporate in policy. Policy measures were aimed mainly at influencing the educational choices of girls, even when it was acknowledged some years later in the Dutch Equal Opportunities Policy Plan 1985 that education must qualify girls and boys for both employment on the labour market and domestic and caring tasks.

The introduction of a common curriculum in the first stage of secondary education in 1993, also referred to as 'basic education', provoked a great deal of debate on what *every* Dutch pupil should learn, in other words, about the role of education in preparing girls and boys for citizenship. The Advisory Council on Government Policy (WRR), the author of the proposal on which the new system was based, defined 'basic education' as: 'A common, general education in the intellectual, cultural and social spheres providing a foundation for further development of the personality, for the meaningful functioning as a member of society, and for making responsible choices on further schooling and an occupation' (WRR 1986, p.77). The Council developed the following criteria for the selection of subjects to be taught in the common curriculum. Those knowledge and skills should be included that a. cannot be acquired later if they have not been learned during basic education; b. in that case, will be a continuing impediment to functioning as a full member of society; c. are essential for the further development of knowledge and skills; and d. cannot be acquired outside school (WRR 1986).

Notions of citizenship are obviously implicit in these criteria, especially in the second criterium. The debate on the common curriculum that preceded and followed the WRR proposals provided a unique opportunity for feminists to advance their claims for the inclusion of the subject Care. It presented the opportunity to conduct a policy going beyond equal opportunities, i.e. a policy giving substance to the idea that education should contribute to the revaluation of feminine values which would educate pupils to 'take on domestic and caring tasks independently'.

The subject Care

> This book is about Care. Maybe you've wondered what this subject would be about. About taking caring of pets? About taking care of your hair or skin? Sure, it's about this, but it's about many other things as well. Care is about things which everyone comes across in their lives. How to deal with money, for example. What you need to be aware of when furnishing a house. How to reduce the chances of getting ill. It's about all kinds of seemingly very ordinary things, things that are very useful to know something about when they crop up. (In: Kontakt. Verzorging voor de basisvorming, [Contact. Care in basic education] 1993)

Prior to the introduction of 'basic education', the subject Care was taught in some lower secondary schools for home-economics education and in some schools offering a broad range of vocational courses after amalgamation. The Care curriculum could vary from pure home economics to a combination of home economics or health education. The emphasis could be on practical aspects, spending a lot of time teaching practical skills like cooking, washing etc., or on theoretical subjects like dietetics. Not all schools offered these aspects, however, under the heading Care but also in courses called home economics or health care. The common aim of these subjects and of Care was the preparation of pupils for traditionally female work in the family and on the labor market.

When the debate on the common curriculum started, teachers and curriculum designers involved in the development of the subject presented their views on what they thought the subject Care should be about. These were based on a broad definition of care which is consistent with the definition proposed by Fisher and Tronto (1990) from a feminist point of view. Care is an activity involving everything we do to maintain, sustain and adapt our world to improve the quality of life. (Fisher & Tronto 1990; Tronto 1993, p.118) The authors do not restrict care to caring for oneself or for other people; it can also concern objects or the environment. Moreover, they do not limit care to the private sphere. Processes of care are not only to be found within the household or community, but also on the labour market (professional care) as well as being provided by the state (the welfare state). To summarize, the concept of care is not restricted to a specific sector of the community or way of life. There is a care dimension to every aspect of society. The subject Care as originally proposed in the common curriculum was to include issues related to sexuality, relationships, consumer issues, the environment, leisure, and work in and out of the home, in addition to home-economics and health care matters.

Another essential characteristic of the proposed subject was the inclusion of cognitive learning objectives as well as objectives for skills and attitudes. 'Head, heart and hands' should be treated in a balanced way; these aspects cannot actually be separated. The value-linked character of the subject Care was underlined. There is a moral dimension to care, as it involves 'being responsible for' and 'considering others'. (Gilligan 1982, Noddings 1988)

At first the subject Care was not included in the plans for restructuring the first stage of secondary education; the proposal of the Advisory Council on Government Policy (WRR) did not give Care the status of a separate subject. Consequently, it was also omitted from the Basic Education Bill of 1989 which was based on the proposal. Thanks to the work of an action committee founded in 1991, Care was included in the common curriculum at the very last moment. Core objectives, which had been developed over a number of years for the other subjects, were formulated immediately. A curriculum proposal was published in 1993 and several educational publishers presented teaching materials just before the beginning of the 1993/4 schoolyear.

The twenty three core objectives of the subject Care can be divided into three categories: health and well-being, consumer issues and the basic necessities of life. Although the emphasis is on the private sphere, links are explicitly made between the private and the public sphere in some of the objectives in the first two categories. For

example, core objectives in the category health and well-being are, 'Pupils should be able to apply basic skills in personal hygiene and indicate the importance of good posture', and, 'Pupils should be able to indicate social and emancipatory aspects of paid and unpaid labor'. Objectives in the other categories include, 'Pupils should know the rights and obligations of consumers' and ' Pupils should be able to assess the composition, nutritional value, packaging information, quality and price of food'.

Schools are now obliged to offer Care as part of the curriculum. A total of 100 hours is recommended in basic education. (In comparison, 120 hours are recommended for biology and 200 for physics.) For most schools offering general education this means the introduction of a completely new subject. Until now, only some aspects of Care have been dealt with in other subjects in these schools, e.g. sexuality, dietetics and environmental questions in biology, and consumer and labor issues in economics. Some of these issues also figured in the social studies curriculum in upper general secondary schools.

The debate

Nearly everyone would agree that domestic and caring tasks play an important role in the lives of most people. However, should it be the responsibility of schools to prepare pupils for these tasks? The debate preceding the introduction of Care in the common curriculum was ostensibly about this question. Is education necessary in this field or is Care taught in the home anyway? Are knowledge and skills in the field of Care so readily accessible in the home that teaching them at school is unnecessary? Another question was whether schools were actually in a position to realize all the stated objectives in this field or do objectives on attitude development (the element of 'heart') go beyond the cognizance of education? The debate on the introduction of Care was in fact about *what* pupils should learn in the common curriculum and *why*. What are the principal objectives of education (or what should they be) in relation to preparing pupils for their future role in society, i.e. for citizenship. In this section we will analyze the positions taken in the debate on the subject Care of the past decade from this perspective.

Two groups of *opponents* to the inclusion of the subject Care in the common curriculum can be identified. The first group argued against the inclusion of elements of Care altogether, the second group agreed that some elements were important for all pupils but was of the opinion that these elements had to be integrated in other subjects (e.g. economics, biology or social studies). Both groups used the fact that the curriculum was already overloaded as their main argument: there is no time available for the introduction of either new subject material or new subjects in education. We will explain the position of both groups of opponents in more detail.

Many teachers in general secondary education totally opposed the introduction of the subject Care. The union representing a large section of general secondary education teachers was one of the main opponents to the introduction of elements of Care in the common curriculum. Their principal objection was that care issues are of a practical nature. They were of the opinion that it would therefore not be useful for the educational and societal careers of their pupils. A number of educational scientists supported their arguments; they emphasized the fact that the task of education is to teach cognitive and meta-cognitive skills and knowledge based on the academic disciplines, and that learning about care would not make any contribution to this (see Ledoux *et al.* 1988, p.72). Learning about care was derisively depicted as 'learning how to fry an egg'. It was stated that skills in the domain of care can be taught at home and that the already limited time available at school would be better spent on something else. In short, opponents to teaching care-related issues at school did their utmost to minimize the importance of care issues by emphasizing that it does not really require knowledge or skills, or at least skills that pupils learn as a matter of course at home.

Most of these opponents also objected to the value-linked connotations of care-related issues. According to them, education is not the appropriate place for the development of attitudes and values and is, in fact, not able to fulfill this function. Nor is it

desirable that it does as values are subjective, so this would constitute influencing pupils.

A second group of opponents did not dispute the importance of care-related issues in education, but questioned the singularity of Care as a school subject. Critics pointed out the lack of tradition of the subject and the heterogeneity of its constituent elements. Moreover, according to them, topics in the field of care were already included, or could be included, in other subjects. The Advisory Council on Government Policy, the author of the proposal for the common curriculum (WRR 1986), was the most influential exponent of this view. The Council was of the opinion that a number of cognitive aspects of Care, for example budgeting, dietetics and environmental issues, could be, or were already, included in economics and biology. Many biology and economics teachers were in favour of the integration of care-issues in their subjects, but were particularly in favour of those issues that were already part of their curriculum. Moreover, they feared that the inclusion of the subject Care in the common curriculum would be at the expense of the time available for their own subjects. This argument was mainly an expression of teachers' fears about their own jobs.

To sum up, the opponents firstly based their arguments on the assumption that work in the 'private sphere' does not require knowledge and skills. Most care-work is done by women and is unpaid; it is assumed that they merely have to rely on their innate qualities. The idea that care is a female / feminine quality and not an activity results in the approach that it is not necessary to teach how to care. Secondly, the opponents relied on educational theories that cast doubt on the value of giving training in skills and about the possibilities and responsibilities of education beyond the realm of the cognitive (see also Noddings 1988).

In terms of citizenship and the role of education, the opponents of the subject Care were usually adherents of a traditional educational model in which preparation for functioning in paid labor and as an independent, responsible citizen is central. The opponents of the inclusion of elements of Care argued that these elements belonged in the private sphere, a domain in which education, in their view, does not need to play a role. They defended a construction of Care as a private issue which belongs in private life and is not, therefore, a relevant subject in the common curriculum. The second group of opponents accepted Care-related elements in education, but their proposal to integrate the subject in other areas of learning meant that the orientation on private life would be lost. In both cases, the relevance of issues pertaining to the private sphere to the preparation of pupils for future citizenship was denied. From a feminist point of view, this reflects a narrow concept of citizenship.

Those *in favor* of including the subject Care in the common curriculum were to be found in the more progressive education trade unions, in consumers' and environmental protection organizations, and in the women's movement. Among teachers, proponents of the subject Care were mainly to be found in vocational education, especially teachers in home economics and health care education. Their professional associations played an important role in the debate. Of course, motives like job security also played a role in their arguments.

A large number of the organizations mentioned above collaborated in the 'Action Committee for Care' that was founded in 1990. The committee based its arguments on both educational and emancipatory principles which will be discussed in more detail below.

Some teachers' unions and educationalists were in favor of Care because it aims to integrate 'head, heart and hands', hence supporting their plea for a broad educational model. They argued for the inclusion of educational aims at the practical and socio-emotional level. From this perspective, Care was presented as a 'counterbalance to the one-sided emphasis on cognitive development' in the common curriculum. A broad education embracing 'head, heart and hands' was considered to be important for all pupils, but particularly for pupils of the former vocational schools. Few subjects originating from vocational education were included in the common curriculum, technology being the notable exception.

The strongest proponents, however, were to be found in the equal opportunities lobby. Their basic argument was that the introduction of this subject should contribute to the redistribution between women and men of work in and outside the home, or of paid and unpaid labor (Extra & Veneberg 1987). Men lag behind in the field of caring tasks and this impedes women's participation in paid labor. Education should, therefore, aim to include boys in caring subjects. Boys should learn a number of caring skills at school, with the expectation that they will also learn to value and respect these skills. An important argument for the inclusion of Care in the curriculum was that it should contribute to the social status of traditionally female skills and tasks. It was also assumed that the addition of a subject in the curriculum in which girls 'have a head start' would be good for their self-confidence (Weeda 1987).

The supporters of the subject Care disproved some of the arguments of its opponents. As to the argument that pupils learn Care as a matter of course at home, they pointed out that this was far more likely to be true of girls than boys. Studies on how girls and boys spend their time show that girls spend far more on domestic tasks than boys (Nationaal Scholierenonderzoek [National Research on Secondary School Pupils] 1992). With reference to the relevance of giving training in skills, attitudes and values, the opponents of Care were reminded that before the introduction of the common curriculum, the suitability of the subject for some pupils, namely girls in home economics education, was not doubted. Moreover, the argument against teaching practical skills was seldom used in relation to the subject 'technology'. Just like Care, this was only taught in vocational education prior to the introduction of the common curriculum. The 'feminine' nature of the skills in question appears to have been the main justification for the argument that practical skills should not be taught at school. At the same time, it was disputed whether Care was primarily a 'practical' subject. Care is an entity of knowledge, skills and attitudes that only make sense as a whole.

An argument against integrating Care in economics and biology was that some aspects of Care were indeed already dealt with in these subjects. Biology and economics teachers, however, deal with such aspects in a way that is not consistent with the aims of Care. They present them merely as biological and economic phenomena. The environment, dietetics and stimulants, for example, are dealt with as aspects of everyday life in Care. Moreover, topics in Care are structured differently to topics in biology and economics. A thematic approach in biology or economics means that different aspects of a specific economic or biological concept are dealt with together, such as metabolism or production. In Care, on the other hand, a thematic approach means that topics related to a specific situation in everyday life are dealt with together. For example, sexuality as a theme in biology concentrates on venereal diseases and reproduction whereas the physical, mental and social changes occurring during puberty would also be dealt with in Care. Finally, knowledge, attitude and skills are of equal importance in Care while biology and economics give priority to the acquisition of knowledge. (Robijns & Volman 1991).

To sum up, the proponents were adherents of a broader concept of education than the opponents. Firstly, their notion of citizenship includes the whole range of activities in society (public and private). Secondly, their opinion about the relationship between cognitive, practical and affective elements in education is different. However, the proponents did not consistently enter the debate on educational models. Consequently, they were not consistent in the way they constructed the subject Care and the way in which they defended its importance.

Constructing oppositions

Two twin concepts in the form of oppositions were at the centre of the discussion preceding the introduction of Care in the common curriculum. Both opponents and proponents have used the same oppositions in the debate, namely the private sphere *as opposed to* the public sphere, and skills and values *as opposed* to the cognitive aspects of education.

We have already stated that the proponents of Care were primarily to be found in

the equal opportunities lobby. A plea was made for a broad educational model. Schools should educate pupils for all areas of life, not only public life, but private life as well. This objective of schooling criticizes employment as the core of citizenship. It implies a broad definition of citizenship in which 'feminine' domains and values are included. While opponents dispute the relevance of Care because of its connection with the 'private sphere', the proponents welcome it for virtually the same reason: as a subject it was considered to be particularly suitable for accommodating the skills, knowledge and values from the private sphere in education. Both those for and against the subject drew a clear line between the public and 'private' sphere, placing Care on one side.

As we showed before, in the content that proponents advocated for the subject Care the emphasis was on the private sphere. In some of the core objectives, however, links were explicitly made between the private and public sphere. This is consistent with the recent approach of feminist studies not to associate care with a specific social domain or with private life exclusively. All activities have a care dimension, including institutional and political activities. The reverse is also true, all care activities have political connotations (Fisher & Tronto 1990). Such an approach displaces the unequivocal attribution of care to women and femininity. In the debate, however, the opponents themselves defined Care as a subject concerning the private sphere. By defending the importance of knowledge and skills for functioning in the private sphere, they adopted the opposition 'public' vs 'private' of the opponents, and thus adopted a concept of citizenship which actually did not fit in their own educational model.

The second opposition is the dichotomy cognitive - practical. The position of the proponents was that the 'head, heart and hands' elements of Care cannot be separated, but they let themselves be persuaded to emphasize the 'heart' and 'heads' elements at the expense of the cognitive elements. Although they were of the opinion that the image of Care as constructed by its opponents did not do justice to the subject, they often presented Care as a practical and value-linked subject themselves. In this way, values were expressed by both proponents and opponents as the counterpart of knowledge. From the perspective of their own educational model, it would have been more appropriate for the proponents to emphasize the fact that other subjects are also not free from values. Those who argue that education is not a suitable medium or is not even in a position to develop attitudes, deny the fact that attitude development is intrinsically linked with education. The present curriculum is already an historical product with implicit choices on what all pupils need learn to function in society later and, thus, on what is a good citizen. But by associating values with Care exclusively, the proponents remain confined in the opposition knowledge - values. Moreover, by claiming that 'values' are a speciality of Care and defining Care as a subject pertaining to the private sphere, the idea that values are a private issue is reinforced.

A similar problem arose in connection with the first success of feminist curriculum politics that we mentioned in the introduction of this paper, namely the introduction of women's history as a compulsory examination subject in all Dutch secondary schools in 1990 and 1991. In the eyes of pupils and teachers, women's history has very obvious normative connotations. This has resulted in girls and boys being quick to express opinions about the position of women and how it has changed. The normative nature of women's history has prevented students from considering it as a body of knowledge (ten Dam & Rijkschroeff *forthcoming*).

Approaching values as a phenomenon to which attention may or may not be paid in education is not without consequences. With the introduction of Care, value-linked emancipatory objectives from other subjects, such as economics, have been transferred to the new subject. Such normative objectives (e.g. 'pupils should be able to indicate social and emancipatory aspects of paid and unpaid labor') are isolated and presented as a separate subject, instead of being incorporated in the whole curriculum.

The 'Care lobby' was successful in getting the subject Care introduced as a compulsory subject in secondary education. It was included at the last moment which resulted in a lot of practical problems. The subject is not taught in all schools yet. Especially schools for

general education were less willing to introduce the subject and did not have suitable classrooms and qualified teachers for Care. Care was lagging behind in the development of curriculum materials and in-service-training in comparison with others subjects. It is open question to whether Care will acquire the status of a fully-fledged subject.

The weak position of the subject cannot only be attributed to the timing of the decision. In this paper we have signalled problems of a more fundamental nature. There is a problematic side-effect to the strategy and arguments used by the proponents. For them, Care was a subject covering care activities in all spheres of life and a subject in which 'head, heart and hands' were integrated. In the debate, however, they themselves gave form to these oppositions. As the opponents emphasized the futility of the private sphere, the proponents responded by stressing its importance. Likewise, because the opponents appealed for a cognitive emphasis in the common curriculum, the proponents pointed out the importance of practical skills and values. The inseparability of public and private, and of knowledge and skills and values, disappeared from the debate.

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